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Huntington, NY – On Tuesday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – Huntington) joined Parents for Megan's Law Executive Director Laura Ahearn to announce \$500,000 in new federal funding to support the Sex Offender Registration Tips program (SORT), the nation's first and only free confidential helpline for issues related to registered sex offenders. The recent rescue of Jaycee Dugard and the missed opportunities to arrest repeat sex offender Phillip Garrido highlight the need for increased support of Parent's for Megan's Law and their critical services.

"Nothing we do is more imperative than keeping our children safe. Parents for Megan's Law works tirelessly to ensure we are protecting our kids and works with law enforcement to bring criminals to justice. Currently, Parents for Megan's Law is overburdened and lacks adequate resources to provide critical services. With new federal funds, they will be able to effectively operate their national hotline and website. I'm proud to be working with them to fund this important program," said Rep. Steve Israel.

"The National SORT Program provides parents and community members the opportunity to report offenders who may be in violation of registration laws, employment restrictions, supervision violations or who are in positions of trust where they can access potential child victims. Tips are triaged and forwarded to appropriate law enforcement agencies for follow-up action. This program is a valuable public safety tool, made possible by Congressman Israel's unwavering dedication and commitment to protecting our most vulnerable from victimization", said Laura Ahearn, Executive Director of Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victims Center.

The federal funding, which Rep. Israel requested as a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, will allow Parents for Megan's law to meet new reporting mandates passed by the State of New York while maintaining their sex offender issues helpline and support services.

In Suffolk County, NY there are 925 registered sex offenders. In Nassau County, NY there are 489 registered sex offenders.

The new federal funding for Parents for Megan's Law was passed as part of the FY2010 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Act, which was passed by the full House of Representatives by a vote of 259-157 on June 18, 2009.